

## Meeting Holiness with a Generous Spirit

Jesse Hefter

February 15, 2026

Maimonides Kehillah

Parashat Teruma begins with a request. HaShem directs Moshe to speak to the Jewish people and ask, “V’Yikchu Li Terumah” – Take to me a Teruma, an offering. Our tradition teaches us that the specific implementation of Teruma when applied to the produce of the farmer is as follows. If a person desires to meet the objective of giving, they are expected to give 1 volume of produce for every 50 volumes of produce. If they are unable to meet the 2% objective, tradition allows them to reduce the proportion to 1 in 60 volumes. However, if one “had a good year in the fields” and feels particularly generous, he or she may offer up to 1 in 40 volumes of produce as their Teruma.

Comes the Peninim Yekarim (Rabbi Shimon Betzalel Newman, Warsaw, 1924) and offers the following insight. The word “li” in our Parashah has the numerical equivalent (Gematria) of 40. He continues by saying that the Din by Teruma is that a person who possesses or demonstrates an “Ayin Yafeh” – a generosity of spirit – may offer 1 in 40 parts of their produce. Such a person, continues Rabbi Newman, is aptly described in the continuation of the Pasuk as a “Nediv Lev” – one who gives from the heart.

This approach, of always looking to give from the perspective of “li”, extends into our own lives as well. When we offer gratitude to HaShem, when we build batei kenaysiyot to HaShem, when we perform Mitzvot, our giving and doing should always be with “nedivut halev” – with a sense of generosity that stems from intense gratitude, deep appreciation, and driven intentionality.

After listing the material items needed to build and enhance the construction of the Mishkan, the Torah states, “v’asu li Mikdash v’shachanti b’socham Kchol asher ani mareh otcha et tavnit HaMishkan”. You shall make “li” (For me) a Mikdash (a special sacred place) and I (HaShem) will rest my Presence amongst you; according to everything that I (HaShem) have shown you, including the building plans for the Mishkan.

Immediately, we notice the word “li” in the pasuk. Following from our earlier discussion, the Torah wants to again make sure that when we get ready to build the Miqdash we appreciate the opportunity it presents by supporting it from our most generous side (“li”).

Comes the Shem MiShmuel (Rabbi Shmuel Bornsztain, the second Sochatchover Rebbe (1855-1926) in the name of his father, the Admor R. Avraham Sochatchover, and makes the following observation about the relationship between Mishkan and Miqdash (i.e., why one

structure needs two names). He begins by quoting the Gemara at the very beginning of Masechet Eruvin (2a) that states: Mishkan ikrey Miqdash v'Miqdash ikrey Mishkan (the Mishkan is referred to as the Miqdash and vice versa). The building is referred to as Miqdash from the perspective of the Jewish people, for it is they who set aside (mitkadshim) their physical assets (building materials, money, labor) for such a project. This approach to sanctifying/separating our physical materials for the service of HaShem creates an association with the divine in a direction that vectors from below (this world) to above (the supernal world). On the other hand, the Mishkan is aptly named to represent the Divine Presence within our physical world and among the Jewish people. This association is vectored from above to below.

So, there exists a point of intersection in the world, the physical world, where these two vectors meet, one signifying the yearning to give of ourselves and our possessions in the service of the Divine to draw upwards closer to the Divine, and the other representing the extending downwards of the Divine Presence into our world. Thus, the use of both names for the structure is now much clearer.

May we be blessed to recognize that point of intersection when it presents itself to us, and may our lives always be the synthesis of our yearning to reach for the Divine and the Divine reaching into us.